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AUTHOR Deshler, David; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Recognizing the growth of educational support services for family day care throughout New York State and other parts of the country, a policy oriented evaluation was performed to analyze the feasibility of such a service being adopted and continued as an educational delivery system by communities throughout the nation. The evaluation used a naturalistic research methodology including (1) a literature review, (2) analysis of records, documents, and demographic data, (3) onsite observation, (4) elite and specialized interviewing according to role perspective, and (5) a mailed questionnaire. Data were collected from 23 sites where efforts had been made to undertake the establishment of a family day care educational support system, and from an indepth case study of a particular family day care pilot project. The efforts of this pilot project to disseminate its model were included in the evaluation. Criteria that were used by the evaluation team for judging the feasibility for adoption and continuation of program efforts were credibility, observability, relevance, relative advantage, ease in understanding and usability, compatibility and try-ability. The evaluation results are intended to be useful to potential funders in decisions related to ongoing financial support for such efforts and to present and prospective program directors in their efforts to present the needs and potential benefits of a day care educational support system. (SH)

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A POLICY-ORIENTED EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR FAMILY DAY CARE

by

David Deshler
Diane Jaenicke
Steven Maynard-Moody

Department of Community Service Education
New York State College of Human Ecology
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

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A POLICY-ORIENTED EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR FAMILY DAY CARE

INTRODUCTION

A unique form of adult education to assist self-employed child care providers has been undertaken recently in several parts of the country. Centers have been established where persons who provide day care in their homes (family day care providers), parents whose children are being cared for in the homes of care givers, and professional child care educators can share ideas, experiences, resources and training. Informal educational programs are often planned for day care providers including workshops on child development, and trips to community resources. In some cases certificate courses are offered in cooperation with Departments of Social Services for purposes of licensing. Informal, self directed learning is encouraged through newsletters and through the loan of books and other resources related to the care of children. In some instances, teen aides are trained to work with children in family day care homes.

The types of persons who have been engaged in generating these educational support programs include:

- Cooperative Extension specialists and agents with human resources programming responsibilities for adults and youth;
- Social workers and community outreach workers in human services and child caring agencies;
- Child care and staff development training officers in social services/welfare departments;
- Community colleges, colleges and universities whose facilities guide students preparing for the child caring and human services professions;
- Family day care providers' associations.

A growing number of state and local family day care associations recently have emerged (Bookman, 1975; Keyserling, 1972) mostly in conjunction with efforts to provide these educational support systems. Representatives from eleven associations attending the Day Care and Child Development Council of America's 1975 National Forum on Family Day Care reported that family day care provider organizations existed in at least 17 states as of that time (Bookman, 1975).

Although these efforts indicate a change from the past, it is important to view them from a perspective of the extent of family day care as a phenomenon in the United States and the more recent intervention on the part of government. It is estimated that over six million children under six years of age are in need of child care. There is little data on the number of school-aged children who need before and after school care. One estimate is 14 million. Just over one million children are cared for in day care centers and family day care homes that are licensed or approved. It is estimated that over 79 percent of all day care services in the United States take place in private home settings commonly referred to as family day care homes (Office of Child Development, 1976).

Family day care is not only the most pervasive form of day care but undoubtedly the oldest form of child care by someone other than the immediate or extended family. Surprisingly it has a rather scant history in American child welfare history and in the child development literature. The advent of governmental intervention to assist in the provision of programs for the daytime care of children in especially troubled home situations occurred as early as 1933. Ten years later, the Lanham Act provided some $51 million to build day care centers for mothers who were employed in war industries. This kind of investment has not been repeated. However, an incremental government policy to support child day care has persisted. Family day care, as a recognized option by government, first occurred on behalf of children of widows in Title IV of the Social Security Act. It was later specified and officially regulated under federal guidelines through the Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements (1968). More recently, the demand for day care services has expanded as increasing numbers of women have entered the labor market. The cost of providing adequate care in group or center care programs has spiraled beyond the means of many parents. Resources of government for such services have become more scarce, and consequently family day care has been brought to the policy forefront. With this new recognition comes the accompanying concern on the part of those in government for enforcing federal standards where children are cared for outside their own home. Aside from the ideological tension between regulation as a governmental intervention and the "natural" unregulated system of child care, the standards of the federal or state governments have been operationally impossible to enforce (Southern Regional Education Board, 1974) They essentially rely on voluntary licensing and therefore attract, for the most part, those providers who are interested in caring for children

whose care is subsidized by the local Department of Social Services, since these agencies usually require caregivers to be in compliance with the licensing law. Under federal regulations the states have the responsibility for licensing which includes facilities, numbers and groupings of children, safety and sanitation, social services, health and nutrition, parent involvement, and provider training. Vigorous enforcement efforts have been scattered and non-pervasive among the states. The goal of assuring the quality of family day care even in those instances where the federal government is providing funds, let alone in other instances where private family day care is occurring is being viewed as an educational problem. The family day care support systems which are the focus of this study are an educational alternative to enforcement of regulations as a means for assuring quality family day care. These programs represent the birth of a new type of social service and a new audience for the field of adult education.

EVALUATION FOCUS AND METHODOLOGY

Policy decision-makers at the federal government level, at the local government level and at the program implementation level are being asked to consider the feasibility of family day care support systems.

Recognizing the increased interest in family day care as an alternative focus of the government in its efforts to assure quality child care, the Carnegie Foundation provided funds (1975-1977) for a family day care support system in Nassau County, New York as a demonstration project. This education and support system for family day care had been started earlier as a Special Needs Project of the Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture through New York State Cooperative Extension, Cornell University. The evaluative research reported in this paper was funded as part of the Nassau County Carnegie demonstration project and was an exploratory evaluative research effort to examine and analyze the feasibility of family day care support systems being adopted and continued by communities in New York State. The findings, drawn primarily from qualitive data, are intended to provide evaluative judgments with implications for policy decisions related to further efforts to either encourage or discourage this form of support for improving the quality of family day care in the United States.

Policy oriented program evaluation models have been described by Stufflebeam et al (1971); Weiss (1972) and Wergin (1976) as processes of identifying values, critical issues and indicators; selecting criteria; and making relevant judgments concerning the worth of a social program or its components in relationship to

policy decisions that will have probable future consequences. Policy decision-oriented evaluations can be conducted using any of four combinations among external and internal evaluators and evaluative criteria as shown in Figure 1.

Internal Evaluators Internal Criteria	Internal Evaluators External Criteria
External Evaluators Internal Criteria	External Evaluators External Criteria

Figure 1: Alternative Relationships between Internal and External Evaluators and Source of Criteria.

This study was conducted by external evaluators, using external criteria. This mode seemed most appropriate since the primary aim of the study was to assist external policy decisions rather than to affect the administrative functioning of the program itself.

It was decided by the evaluators with concurrence from the funders that the primary focus of the evaluation would be on the value and worth of the family day care support system model in terms of its feasibility for adoption and continuation at sites in New York State where efforts had been made to introduce it. Criteria for successful adoption and continuation predictions were adapted from the work of Glaser (1972). These criteria include: 1) the characteristics of a particular innovation, (i.e. credibility, observability, relevance, relative advantage, compatibility and triability); 2) recognition of Need; 3) characteristics of Implementors; 4) manner and extent of dissemination; and 5) facilitating forces. Findings are reported in this study according to the above categories. The study used "quasi-experimental" or "naturalistic" research, that is, research in which the investigator takes natural settings, already established and functioning, and adds a data collection dimension so that some conclusion about relative effectiveness can be reached (Fox, 1969, p. 453). The functional flow of activities included the following:

1) Literature on family day care and family day care support systems was reviewed;
2) Elite and specialized interviews were conducted with persons in New York State outside of New York City who were known to have some knowledge of attempts to start a component of a family day care support system;

3) Questionnaires were sent to persons who had received information about family day care support systems that had been disseminated by the demonstration project;

4) Site visits to selected programs where more extensive activity had occurred were conducted for observation purposes;

5) Data were analyzed and the research findings are presented in this paper.

The population for this study within New York State consisted of 20 instances or locations outside of New York City where presumed efforts had been made to attempt to start at least one component of a family day care support system. The names of contact persons were obtained from the Nassau County Demonstration Project, from New York State Cooperative Extension, Cornell University, and from interviewees themselves during the interviews. In places where more than program planning activities had occurred and some program component had been established, program directors were asked to identify persons in other agencies and organizations with whom they had worked. These persons in most cases were interviewed for the purpose of obtaining an external perspective on the program's possibilities for adoption and continuation. Topics and questions discussed during the interviews are listed in Appendix A. The distribution of field interviews according to type of interviewee is presented in Table I.

TABLE I

Distribution of Field Interviews According to Type of Interviewees

Type of Interviewees	Number of Interviews
Program Implementers and Those Considering	30
Day Care Provider Association Board Members	4
Personnel from Community Organizations, and state and Local Government	12
Personnel from Departments of Social Service/Welfare	5
Family Day Care Specialist Consultants	4
Total	55

The population for the questionnaire was composed of persons who had been sent written materials or had used the slide presentation prepared by the Nassau County Family Day Care Demonstration Project staff. Questionnaires were mailed to 81 persons, who for the most part resided outside of the state of New York.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain information on the usefulness and effectiveness of these dissemination and promotional activities. The content of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

Analysis of data obtained from review of literature, elite and specialized interviewing, observations during site visits and from the mailed questionnaires was accomplished primarily through content analysis of this qualitative data. Item, thematic, and structural analysis was of particular value (Merton, 1968, p. 569).

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILY DAY CARE SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Analysis of data from interviewing and observation of family day care support systems in New York State revealed considerable variability in: 1) the level of effort; 2) the type of services and/or training being offered; and 3) the definition of the clientele. A minimum effort was characterized as one where a person in a community, usually a Cooperative Extension agent, was thinking about or engaged in planning to "do something about family day care." With more effort, persons usually reported that training for family day care providers was occurring. With still more effort, interviewees reported that training was combined with other support services such as a news letter or resource trips, but not a gathering place or facility. The most developed programs provided a wide range of support services, including a facility as well as training. These program components will be described briefly.

Formal training, in some cases, is provided only for care givers that need to be licensed in order to provide child care to children who are subsidized by the government. In other cases it is for anyone who is providing child care and a license may or may not be an outcome. This training tends to take the form of workshops on topics of relevance to the care givers such as safety, emergencies, discipline, child development, sex education and nutrition. Family day care providers often choose the topics and help develop or facilitate the sessions. Since counties vary over the extent that they enforce the licensing requirement, attendance is for the most part voluntary.

Newsletters come in varying degrees of journalistic sophistication, but generally contain information on community resources, child development, nutrition and topics generally covered in training. In the counties where there is no distinct agency for any family day care support, Cooperative Extension has tended to provide this program component. The newsletters are in some locations specifically for family day care providers. In other locations they are provided for parents as well.

Toy, book, and equipment loans are among the most tangible of the supports offered. They serve both as ends unto themselves in improving family day care facilities and as means for attracting providers to the training programs. The library aspect usually includes both books for children and written resources for the provider. Toy loans include items which are usually beyond the budget of a family day care giver. Some toys are new while others more used may have been donated for this purpose. Equipment primarily includes baby equipment and large play items. Three programs also sell supplies used in early childhood training on a non-profit basis to the providers.

Drop-in facilities for providers and their day care children are part of the support system in seven counties. This, perhaps the least formal, aspect of the program concept, is geared toward increasing the interaction between providers and professional agency staff and among providers. It also provides a low-keyed educational approach since ideas for stimulating healthy development are modeled and displayed at the facility.

Parent referrals to providers is a relatively rare program piece, yet another very tangible one. Some programs advertise that they have a list of care givers. When parents call, they are given a list of names that, according to various criteria, are considered suitable. The parent then contacts the care giver(s) and makes his or her choice. In no case does actual placement of children by the support system take place.

Coordination, planning, and advocacy for family day care in the community was a common thread throughout the counties. This included program development for increased support services, mediation between family day care providers and the local Department of Social Services and the encouragement of self-help provider associations (Bookman, 1975).

Other services to family day care homes mentioned less frequently included a mobile unit, organized enrichment activities for children in these homes (e.g. group field trips), home visitor programs and attempts to organize cooperative back-up provider substitutes service in the event of illness or emergency. Table II indicates the range of existing family day care program support components that were reported according to their distribution among 20 of the 56 counties in New York State.

All of the efforts to provide family day care support systems were reported to have occurred within the last three to four years with the exception of efforts in Tompkins and Nassau Counties where programs have existed for up to eight years.

Well over half of the activities had occurred within the last two years.

TABLE II

Family Day Care support Program Components Distributed According in their Occurance in Counties in New York State

	Newsletter	Training Licensed	Training Unlicensed	Drop-in Facility	Parent Referral	Teen Program	Library Toy Load Equipment Supplies	Provider Substitutes	Enrichment Activities	Coordination Other Groups
Broome	300	X		X			X			X
Cattaraugus					X		X			X
Cortland		X		X			X			X
Genesee	650									X
Jefferson		X	X				X		X	
Madison			X							
Monroe	300	X	X				X			X
Nassau		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oneida		X								
Onondaga	200	X		X			X			X
Ontario	70	X								
Orange										
Orleans		X	X							
Oswego	300									
Schuyler	400		X	X		X	X		X	
Steuben	1400	X	X	X	X		X	X		X
Suffolk	500	X								
Tompkins	500	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wayne			X							X
Westchester	450	X					X			X
TOTALS	13	13	9	7	4	3	11	3	4	11

In order to make evaluative judgments about the potential for adoption and continuation of the family day care support system idea or model, data were collected through interviews on the perceptions of early adopters and others in their communities regarding the strengths and limitations of the model. According to Glaser (1972) the probability of successful spread or transfer of a model or innovation to a new setting depends in part upon the characteristics of the model itself. He suggests that if the innovation possesses the attributes of credibility, observability, relevance, relative advantage, compatibility and triability it will more likely be adopted and continued.

Credibility.

Credibility of an innovation stems from the soundness of the evidence for its value or from its espousal by highly respected persons or institutions. Because of the difficulty of using control groups with family day care support systems, there is limited experimental data to support consequences or impacts on children as a result of providing educational and support services to family day care givers. However, evaluation conducted by Crowe, Pine, and Stein (1975) on the Nassau County Family Day Care Demonstration Project did find evidence that those care givers who participated in the programs reported a gain in positive self image, increased knowledge about child development, and a change in safety and nutritional practice. Those interviewed imputed these changes to the influence of the family day care support system. When data from interviews from this study were analyzed, it was found that the demonstration models in both Tompkins and Nassau Counties were considered sound on the part of almost all who had heard about them or had read the evaluation report of Crowe, Pine and Stein (1972). The directors of the Tompkins and Nassau County programs are well known among implementors and highly respected. The fact that Cornell University was a party to the dissemination of the idea through Cooperative Extension added to the credibility of the model.

Observability.

Observability of an innovation refers to the opportunity for potential users or adopters to see a demonstration of the innovation or its results in operational practice. Analysis of interview data revealed that almost all of the implementors of family day care support systems had made site visits to either the demonstration project in Tompkins County or in Nassau County. These two demonstration efforts served consistently as sources. The program implementors said that it was crucial to be able to actually observe a program in operation in order to grasp the substance interlaced in the informality of the interaction between staff and care givers, but the subtlety of this informal learning was more difficult to observe.

Relevance.

Relevance as a characteristic of an innovation refers to a capacity to cope with a persistent and sharply bothersome problem which is of concern to a large number of people (or to influential people). Relevance also can be defined as the congruence or fit between the characteristics of a programmatic response and the nature of the problems being addressed.

Review of the literature and analysis of interview data indicated that the nature and the severity of problems connected with the care of children in family day care settings were being perceived differently. There is agreement that the care of children through family day care is pervasive and growing. However, for some the care of children in day care homes is a private and not a public problem and therefore is not a sharply bothersome one. For these persons, the support system may be relevant, but inappropriate, encroachment on private life. For others holding an equally pragmatic if more liberal viewpoint, support for family day care in general -- not only as a service for potential welfare clients--is a policy choice required by the already depleted resources of the family. The most persistent theme running through interview data was the justification of the support program as a response to the need for quality family day care. Quality control is seen as necessary in upgrading the care children receive, regardless of the public-private financial configurations involved. Implicit in this position is the assumption of the inadequacy of the "natural" system of family day care, an inadequacy derived from its low occupational status and consequent lack of resources.

Two responses to the problem of quality control have been suggested. One is regulation and the other is education. The fact that large numbers of children are cared for in unregulated situations is a frequent argument for government intervention. However, the difficulty in regulating family day care lies in the fact that it consists of small independent units. Enforcement of the licensing requirement is well beyond the scope of the state's staff capacity. In addition, identification problems arise as few care givers are eager to become licensed. They see no potential benefits and some fear loss of income resulting from having to declare their wages for tax accountability. While no one has data on the numbers of unlicensed homes in operation, estimates made on the basis of numbers of working mothers suggests that most informal family day care remains "underground." The family day care support system model appears to address the problem of regulation "through the back door." Offering incentives (training, materials, referrals, etc.) to the care givers is at once a means and an end--a means of identifying and influencing the kind of care provided through relationship-building and an end in terms of tangible support for the on-going process of family day care. No claims were made by program support implementors who were interviewed that they had performed any actual regulation or control function. However, there was

consistent recognition that the family day care support model provided a relevant response that enriched the care of children and supplied at least one answer to the state's forced laissez-faire dilemma on regulation.

When presidents of family day care provider associations were interviewed, they indicated that the components of the demonstration support system were very relevant to the problems of providers as they know them. In several cases that were reported, care givers had strong reactions to potential loss of their support systems due to funding inadequacies. These reactions provide an "unobtrusive measure" of the value which these provider-leaders confer on the program. The survival of provider associations was seen by these interviewees to be dependent at least in part upon the adoption and continuation of support systems for family day care. The model was perceived by them to be relevant to their professional interests. The model therefore is viewed as highly relevant to those who believe that something should be done to ensure quality control for family day care and who are knowledgeable about the enforcement dilemma of government. The fact that family day care is for the most part "underground" means that these problems, although critical for some, are not widely recognized.

Relative Advantage.

Relative advantage over existing or alternative practices is another characteristic of an innovation which increases its potentiality for adoption and continuation. The advantage afforded by the innovation, however, must offset the considerable effort that may be involved in change.

The Family Day Care Support Demonstration Project model in Nassau County was compared with other forms of support and training for day care providers in order to assess the model's relative advantage. After a review of available literature and analysis of interview data, it appeared that there are two main conceptual alternatives that have been suggested. One of these is the home-visit approach which is methodologically the opposite of the demonstration support projects described above. In the home-visit approach, trained paraprofessionals go into day care homes on some regular basis to deliver training and/or support services. There is a great deal of variation in formality of the program. For example, the West Virginia Department of Welfare's program (Dowling et al., 1976) provides programmed instruction to care givers in their homes via the home visitor, while other programs are much less structured in their mode of training (Dokecki et al., 1971; Wattenberg, 1971; Dusewicz, 1972). The advantages that this model has over the New York demonstration models are: 1) that informal regulation is

feasible given the regular contacts in the home; and 2) the transportation prolems of care givers in getting to training meetings especially in rural areas, are overcome. The fact that the program goes out to the provider, however, does little to foster the collegical relationships among care givers necessary to break down th isolation inherent in the work role (Emlen et al., 1974). This kind of program, especially if it employs a well developed curriculum, requires a substantial financial commitment. It may or may not include support services in addition to training. Analysis of data from interviews conducted as part of the present study indicates that the support services such as the library, toy and equipment loan activities, the drop-in facility, the teen program, and group sponsored enrichment activities, although underplayed in written accounts relative to the New York demonstration projects, were extremely valuable to participants.

Another approach involves training that is designed to lead to an Associate Degree. The Federal Office of Child Development has sponsored the Child Development Associate Consortium which has developed a program for child care workers in general (not specifically family day care). Essentially the program requires an academic year of training and a year of field experience. The Child Development Associate (CDA) program does not outline a specific curriculum, but rather is a competency-based educational model. Attempts are being made (Mathis and Kilmer, 1971) to adapt this to family day care. This more formal educational thrust adds an element of professional development more clearly than does the non-credit training. It addresses the problem of low occupational status of child care givers. The disadvantages of this approach used alone as compared to either the home-visit or the New York demonstration models, which include non-credit and occasionally credit training, is that it is susceptible to the "creaming" process with only the most professionally oriented providers participating. It also is less likely to provide support services in addition to training. However, it is theoretically possible to add the Child Development Associate program as supplementary to the New York demonstration models for those providers who desire the more formal training.

Compatibility.

Compatibility as a characteristic refers to the extent to which the innovation is congruent with the potential adopter's previously established values, procedures and facilities. Compatibility is an additional characteristic which has been found to increase the possibility for adoption and continuation.

From limited interview data obtained from family day care providers who were presidents of family day care associations, there was little evidence that the values and interests of day care providers were incompatible with the values inherent in the program activities of the demonstration model. The only incompatibility appeared to be the necessity of giving up anonymity in order to participate. While the program support staff tend to emphasize education and training, the care givers seem to be valuing the tangibles such as loan of toys and equipment and sometimes the purchase of materials and supplies at reduced rates. In most cases where programs had been in existence for some time, providers by their continued participation reflected compatibility with the services.

However, not all professional child care personnel view the model as compatible with their values. Analysis of interview data revealed that child care professionals who were closely identified with center or group child care tended to view the family day care effort as a form of service which was not as effective as center care. These persons sometimes admit having little first hand evidence upon which to base their judgments. Two interviewees who had been very much committed to center child care changed their minds about the viability of providing quality care through family day care as a result of conducting a survey of family day care situations. Nevertheless, this value conflict over center versus family day care among child care professionals presents a formidable obstacle to the adoption of the model among child care professionals.

Although most everyone would subscribe to the value of providing quality care for children, the demonstration model is attached to the lowest status form of child care. Persons, almost exclusively women, who perform this role are considered by society in general as baby sitters, who perform "women's work" and who should be paid extremely low wages. The notion that public funds should be spent to assist so "common and mundane a task" is probably foreign to the thinking of some public officials. Analysis of interview data suggests that the model is not compatible with the popular view that attributes low priority and low status to family day care providers. This incompatibility of values appears to be the primary obstacle in obtaining sufficient public and private funds to adopt and continue family day care support systems.

Triability, Divisibility or Reversibility

The probability of successful adoption and continuation of an innovation may also be increased by its triability, divisibility, or

reversibility. These characteristics refer to the capacity of the innovation to be introduced one step at a time without an irreversible commitment by a system.

According to Table II (p. 8) most implementors did not elect to implement the family day care support components all at once or on an all or nothing basis. Various combinations of components were implemented. As part of the interviewing, implementors were asked what parts of the program they thought should be started first. Those with the fewest number of components tended to suggest that recruitment for training should be the program piece that should be started first, while implementors who had more well developed programs suggested that recruitment and development of family day care provider association or the development of a day care council which would act as an advocate of the effort would be more appropriate starting activities. There was a difference of opinion among implementors about the importance of a facility or "gathering place." Those who had facilities placed a great deal of emphasis upon their value as a means for identifying and recruiting "underground" providers. When all implementors were asked about which components they would be sure to keep if they had to reduce their programs due to budget cuts there was general agreement that the last thing to be eliminated would be an organizational unit that could provide advocacy for further fund raising. Next in order of high priority for inclusion was training. For those who had facilities, these were considered to be next in priority. There were some who considered the minimal effort to be a newsletter which should be continued in any event. Nevertheless, the variety of alternatives suggests that the triability of the demonstration model in different increments is possible. This is an advantage for its adoption and continuation in some form in spite of fluctuating financial support.

Although it appeared initially from analysis of data that there were few irreversible effects from the introduction of the model into the child care system, upon close examination of some of the imputed evidence provided by interviewees, such a support system, once introduced, would have a tendency to create a further demand for such services on the part of providers. It also may tend to raise the professional expectations for increased wages on the part of providers. When several programs have become financially threatened, the providers have become vocal about their being continued. This political pressure is not likely to persist after a program has been discontinued unless a family day care provider association or a child care council has been formed to act as a continuing advocate for the service.

Another potential reversible consequence which may occur is the stabilization of the family day care work force through increased professionalization. There is some evidence from at least two programs that providers associated with these programs tend to be more stable providers in contrast to the mobility of their cohorts. It is presumed that the discontinuation of a program would mean the loss of this stabilization if the two are in fact related.

If a family day care support system were started and discontinued, the remaining effects from the perspective of taxpapers, parents and providers most likely would be persistent demands for quality service.

Summary

According to Glaser (1972) one criterion set predicting successful adoption and continuation of an innovation includes the characteristics of the innovation itself, i.e., credibility, observability, relevance, relative advantage, compatibility, and triability. Findings from data analysis on efforts to introduce a family day care support model in New York State have been described in relation to each of the above characteristics. Table III summarizes the evaluator's estimated ratings that were arrived at through inter-rater judgments.

TABLE III

Evaluator Estimated Ratings of the Family Day Care Support Demonstration Model According to Characteristics which have Potential for Encouraging its Successful Adoption and Continuation

Characteristics	RATING		
	Almost None	Partial	Considerable
Credibility			X
Observability		X	
Relevance			X
Relative Advantage			X
Compatibility		X	
Triability			X

RECOGNITION OF NEED

Regardless of how meritorious a particular innovation may be in terms of attributes that have been listed above, the potential users and those upon whom they depend for support are much more likely to adopt an innovation if they recognize the severity and pervasiveness of a need that fits with their social values. Although it was not the primary focus of the present exploratory study to conduct a need analysis for family day care support systems in New York State, some qualitative data on the recognition of need were obtained from a review of the literature and from field interview.

Concepts of need are quite diverse and their application to need situations is even less universally understood. However, Bradshaw (1974, p. 185) has provided a helpful differentiation between four dimensions of need which are useful in analyzing need related to family day care educational support systems. These dimensions are: 1) felt need, which can be defined as what people or organizations say that they need when asked; 2) expressed need, which can be defined as a felt need which has taken the form of a demand such as signing up for service; 3) comparative need, which can be defined as the inequity between availability of service conditions in one situation compared to another; and 4) normative need, which can be defined as a condition which does not meet desirable standards that have been identified by acknowledged experts or authorities. Each of these dimensions will be discussed in turn.

Felt Need

Data on the felt need of providers was collected during interviews with presidents of provider associations and from reviewing need assessment reports that had been conducted by several program implementors. Program implementors during interviews also reported the felt needs of providers that had been obtained from them during training or other activities associated with their programs. The items most mentioned by these sources as representing the felt needs of providers included:

- Need to share ideas and overcome personal and professional isolation;
- Need to maintain or improve feelings of self worth that are easily eroded by emotional fatigue when caring for children eight to ten hours a day;
- Need to satisfy parents that adequate care is being provided by them to children entrusted to them;
- Need for alternative ideas and activities to use with children;

- Need for knowledge about better ways to handle discipline and guidance problems; and
- Need for occupational status and recognition for doing a good job.

These felt needs were reported by implementors as informing the content for training. With the exception of support program implementors, there probably are few persons who know about or appreciate these felt needs, since it has only been recently that anyone has bothered to ask.

Expressed Need

Before initiating a family day care support system there is virtually no evidence that providers express a need for such a service. Initially there is no demand. Program implementors reported that they even had difficulty in getting providers to respond to "Pennysaver" or throw-away newspaper ads asking providers to identify themselves. However, after providers became involved with training or other services their expressed need is registered through the following ways:

- Need expressed as requests to be included on newsletter mailing lists;
- Need expressed by attending training and requesting follow-up workshops;
- Need expressed by visiting resource centers and using literature, toy and equipment loans;
- Need expressed by attending planning meetings; and
- Need expressed by investing time in fixing up facilities.

One implementor said, "If they use it, they come to like it, and show that they need it by continued use." Although a very small percentage of providers have used the services of family day care support systems in New York State, those who have used these services apparently appreciate them and have expressed frustration in those instances where they have been discontinued.

Comparative Need

Comparative day care needs of children have usually been analyzed by approaches similar to those described in The Education Commission of States Early Childhood Project (1976). Studies of this type usually include data on clientele such as: numbers of children, especially in single parent homes; density of child population; average family income; number and location of children receiving aid to families of dependent children (AFDC). They often include data on vendors, including: self care; sibling care; relative or friend living with family; relative or friend from outside home; hired sitter in own home; hired sitter outside home; family day care home; and group or center day

care. Comparative need is typically arrived at through making correlations between the demographic characteristics of clientele and availability of services. Sometimes comparisons are made between forms of service for a population. For example, in Schrag's Idaho study (1974), 17% of children needing child care up through 6 years age were taking care of themselves; 10% were receiving sibling care; 28% were being cared for by relatives; 42% were being cared for by hired persons in homes; and 3% were receiving group or center day care. There are no known statistics similar to these for New York State with the exception of a study by Valentine (1970) on day care centers and nursery schools. In order to analyze comparative need for family day care support systems it would be necessary to identify the geographic concentrations of providers in relationship to provision of support systems. Data obtained from interviewing provided evidence that day care support system efforts had floundered in a few sparsely populated rural areas where apparently there were too few providers to make a service feasible.

Normative Need

Expressions of normative need for family day care support systems were found in literature and especially from data obtained from implementors of support systems. Family day care support systems were justified according to these expressions of normative need because children need:

- Stimulating activities as alternatives to television;
- Enriched play environment through the use of more art, creative toys and equipment;
- Positive interpersonal interaction facilitated by a trained provider;
- Reduction in neglect and child abuse; and
- Increased health, safety and nutrition.

According to interview data, normative needs of parents include:

- Assurance and confidence that their children are getting adequate care in a provider home;
- Positive parental role modeling on the part of providers; and
- Increased choice of care givers through availability of referral services.

The normative needs of family day care providers include:

- Increased information and knowledge about child development and parenting;
- Decreased social isolation and increased positive self image;

- Greater knowledge of health, safety and nutrition standards;
- Increased use of community resources that relate to child care;
- More adequate professional behavior that can be defined as partway between being a baby sitter and being a teacher; and
- Increased recognition and public status for the work they perform.

Summary

To what extent are the above descriptions of felt need, expressed need, comparative need and normative need recognized by persons in situations where family day care support systems have been introduced? The felt need of providers is known to very few persons outside of those implementors who have conducted such a need analysis. It certainly is not known to very many public decision-makers or even parents who use the services of the providers. Expressed need on the part of providers has not occurred according to analysis of data until after services have been introduced. Only a small percentage of potential users of support services have taken advantage of them according to implementors who were interviewed. Most of the rationale for family day care support services has been based on normative need on the part of child care experts and implementors. The recognition of need for the most part has yet to occur outside the day care communication network. This appears to be a major inhibitor to the successful adoption and continuation of family day care support systems.

CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPLEMENTORS

In addition to the characteristics of an innovation and the recognition of the need for it on the part of implementors and others, the characteristics of potential users of an innovation have been found to be an important factor in predicting successful adoption and continuation (Glaser, 1972). The findings from this study suggest that the organizational affiliation of the implementor, the knowledge of the implementor, certain personality characteristics, and certain types of skills are related to successful adoption and continuation.

Organizational Affiliation

When implementors and those considering implementation of the family day care system idea were interviewed, they reported that one constraint to their working on this task was whether or not it fell within the mission of their agency or organization, and whether their organization would be a sponsor. Tabke IV depicts the distribution of organizational sponsorship of family day care support components in New York State according to type of organization in the 20 cases contacted.

TABLE IV

Distribution of Organizational Sponsorship of Family Day Care Support Components in New York State According to Type of Organization.

N = 20 Cases*

Type of Organization	Number
Cooperative Extension/Cornell University	16
Departments of Social Service	7
Day Care Councils	6
Community College/University	2
Center Child Care Programs	2
Family Day Care Association	1
Other Community Agencies	7
Total	31

*Note: Number adds up to more than 20 because of mutual sponsorship in some cases.

Cooperative Extension agents with home and family life education responsibilities were more involved in implementing family day care support systems than employees from any other organization. These extension agents reported that they were involved because the cause had been brought to their attention through program support staff at Cornell University and that most of them had some support for these activities from their advisory boards. Others reported that they were engaged in this because they believed in it even though it was considered a low priority by their local employers. Implementors from agencies other than Cooperative Extension tended to report that family day care was not that central to the mission of their agencies and therefore they could not give as much professional staff time to efforts to start support systems. The amount of professional staff on the part of home and family life educators was reported to be critical to the success of support systems.

Knowledge of Implementors

When implementors were asked during interviews what they would consider to be desirable characteristics for program implementors to have if they were to be successful, they reported the following types of knowledge:

- Knowledge of day care and child development;
- Knowledge of the community and its leadership;
- Knowledge about alternative models for day care support systems; and
- Knowledge about funding sources.

It appears to the authors of this study that implementors who were interviewed were knowledgable about day care and child development; were less knowledgable about their communities and its leadership; and could use more information about funding sources.

Implementor Personality Characteristics

Implementors who were interviewed reported that the following personality characteristics were desirable on the part of implementors if their efforts were to be successful:

- Dedication and commitment to quality family day care
- Sensitivity to human needs;
- Empathy for the role of family day care providers;
- Willingness to listen;
- Non-condescending and down to earth with providers;
- Tolerant of insecurity in themselves and others;
- Flexible and open to new possibilities and options; and
- Assertive and willing to stand up to conflict.

It appears to the authors of this study that most of the implementors who were interviewed possessed many of these qualities.

Implementor Skills

In addition to the above mentioned desirable knowledge and personality characteristics of implementors, certain skills were mentioned as very important. They include:

- Ability to scan outward into the community and be sensitive to political information;
- Skill in organizational development and management;
- Skill in public relations;
- Ability to build organizational coalitions.

Several of the persons interviewed admitted that these skills were in short supply among child care professionals and that they were in need of training in this area. It was clear to the authors of this study that these skills were very helpful to implementors who had been relatively successful.

MANNER AND EXTENT OF DISSEMINATION

The fourth factor which tends to influence the possibility of an innovation being adopted and continued is the manner and extent of dissemination. The demonstration projects in both Tompkins and Nassau Counties set as one of their objectives the dissemination of information relevant to the adoption and continuation of such efforts throughout the state of New York. Information obtained in our interviews with the Nassau staff and potential implementors statewide and our survey of those making inquiries suggest four methods of spreading the idea of this kind of support for family day care. They are: 1) written reports and materials; 2) a slide set, "Learning With Love"; 3) site visits to the Storefront: and 4) informal interpersonal contacts.

Implementors in the state very often became aware of the demonstration programs through the educational efforts of Cooperative Extension at Cornell. Several in-service training programs for county agents were conducted over the past several years and agents were encouraged to find audiences for the Extension newsletter, "Day Care Mother," during its lifespan. A state Family Day Care Conference, also primarily organized by Extension staff, was a major event in making salient to the professional human services community the issues involved. Contact with one of the demonstration program staff was cited regularly as a source of implementation assistance.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of these dissemination efforts with persons other than those who were interviewed in connection with implementation efforts in New York State a questionnaire (Appendix B) was mailed to 81 persons who had made inquiry, used the slide presentation or had been sent printed materials. Twenty-seven persons responded. Ten of these respondents indicated that they were unfamiliar with the demonstration program in Nassau County even though they had at one time requested materials. The other respondents were equally divided between those who indicated that they were directly involved in family day care programming and those who viewed themselves as resource people in this regard. Almost all of the respondents were outside of New York State. Table V indicates the number of times persons who mentioned each method of dissemination as a source among the 27 respondents:

TABLE V

Sources of Information Mentioned by Persons Inquiring About Family Day Care Demonstration Program.

N = 27

Sources of Information	Times Mentioned
Written Materials	12
Interpersonal Contacts	12
Site Visit	4
Slide Set	4

Because the percentage of responses was low a follow-up random sample of non-respondents was conducted by telephone and responses were compared with those of the mailed questionnaire. There was no significant difference between the two groups.

The content of the dissemination efforts in addition to certain "how-to" implementation suggestions consists of a rationale for explaining the program's worth to those not yet committed to this approach. There was a considerable range of articulations of this rationale, from "it's a good way to coordinate preventive services to children otherwise unreached," to "it makes family day care more rewarding for the women engaged in it." The most common theme, however, was in regard to the indirect benefits to the children through improving the occupational status, resources, and capabilities of their care givers. One experienced director stated that the informal "spirit" of the model is the most difficult part to transmit to those unfamiliar with family day care and it is perhaps the most essential conceptual element.

Summary

Analysis of the data obtained on the manner and extent of dissemination of the program ideas led to these observations. First, written materials appear to be a necessary but not sufficient method for stimulating implementation attempts. Although the feedback received on the program's publications is positive, the evidence clearly suggests that interpersonal contact is the key to sparking interest in and ensuring an understanding of an innovative program idea. Other researchers have encountered this same phenomenon, including Richland (1965), Glaser (1966), Roberts and Larson (1971), Fairweather (1971) and Havelock (1973).

Second, the low-keyed, informal approach is difficult for many adult education and child development professionals to grasp as it involves an extraordinary amount of support activity which tends to be viewed as an "unnecessary frill." This, however, is believed by implementors to be essential for recruiting participants and meeting their needs.

FACILITATING FORCES

Even when an excellent innovative program idea has been disseminated and promoted through the most effective means to capable program implementors who have been ready to adopt it, several facilitating forces have been found to be essential if adoption and continuation is to occur. It appeared to the research team that the adoption and continuation of family day care support systems in New York State were most dependent upon their ability to obtain sufficient resources and supportive organizational relationships.

Facilitating Forces

The county environments into which these programs efforts were introduced were characterized by shrinking budgets for human services, high unemployment, and a general commitment at all levels of government to hold the line on expansion of the public sector. The ceiling on Social Services expenditures imposed by Congress in 1972 created a hardship situation in New York State, making it difficult to continue to provide direct services at levels outlined in policy, much less offer indirect services such as support systems for family day care. This was hardly a facilitating environment for the birth and growth of a new social program.

Without exception, the interviewees interviewed listed funding as the major hindrance to program development. Substantial energy has been put into "hustling" funds in even the most modest programs we encountered. It was felt that the instability of what funding there is has stifled aggressive adoption of the model because of the tendency against raising expectations and the energy required for organizational survival. Programs were also hurt by funding shuffles in other organizations. They were especially hurt by the demise of the Cornell University Cooperative Extension newsletter for family day care providers. Our discussions with state and local government policy-makers indicated that while day care services are in increasing demand and the informal day care lobby in the state is relatively well-organized, only a pragmatic financial bid for recognition rather than a moralistic or quality-control argument will be successful in competition

for scarce resource.

The following is a list of sources of funding and in-kind support mentioned by implementors. These sources vary widely. The budgets of programs range from a few hundred dollars to over eighty thousand dollars per year.

- Cooperative Extension (local and state)
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- United Way
- Local institutions of higher education
- New York State Division For Youth
- City government
- County government
- Civic organizations
- Local affiliates of the National Association for the Education of Young Children
- Comprehensive Employment and Training Act funds
- Community Action Program
- Departments of Social Services
- Private non-profit agencies
- Catholic Charities
- Foundations
- Donations from the community at large

Funding sources were more available to counties that were more urban. Only one rural county was able to establish a facility or "gathering place." On the whole, very rural counties have not been able to adopt the complete program model, but have implemented pieces of it, usually training sessions and/or newsletters. When interviewees in these counties were asked what they thought it would take to get a more complete program established in a community like theirs, the consensus response was that it would take outside funding. They suggested that child care did not receive a very high priority for funding in rural areas.

Supportive Organizational Relationships

According to findings, it is difficult to establish a family day care support system without cooperation and coordination among child care agencies and the county Department of Social Service. Although the Nassau County Demonstration Project was reported to enjoy cooperative relationships with the local Department of Social Services (DSS), few other counties have been able to emulate this. All but four of the 20 counties reported negative or non-participation by the local DSS. This rejection was more benign neglect rather than direct hostility. According to interviewees' reports there were isolated cases in which a caseworker working with day care providers would become involved with a family day care support effort. But, for the most part, the response from that organization has

been minimal. Consistently, however, both these situations with cooperative support from the local DSS and those without it, stated that this relationship was essential for successful program development and continuation. Implementors also reported that unless the local DSS was providing licensed family day care for publicly subsidized children, it was difficult to get this organization to cooperate. One frustrated implementor remarked, "Support for family day care is simply an idea whose time has not come in this county."

Another important supportive relationship that was reported by implementors was with child care centers. In some instances, mutual training programs were being devised, joint funding bids were being developed, and referrals of clients was common. This kind of solidarity was seen as beneficial to day care in general. In other communities, however, family day care as an organized option was reported to pose a threat to the existence of center care and professional clashes developed.

Interviewees report that in some counties day care and child development councils had been organized similar to the one in Ithaca, New York (Trisdorfer, 1971). It was reported that these councils tended to be composed of professionals who were mainly concerned with the problems of day care centers. The conflict between center care professionals and those interested in family day care referred to above was reported to be present at times in these councils. In other cases it was reported that professionals were working together to gain public support for both types of child care. It appears to the authors of this study that it is unlikely that much public support for family day will occur without a more united front from child care professionals.

CONCLUSIONS

The research team for this study set out to conduct an exploratory policy-oriented evaluation on the feasibility for adoption and continuation of family day care educational support systems that had been initiated in various parts of New York State. These programs represent the birth of a new type of social service and a new audience for the field of adult education. Data were analyzed from: 1) a review of literature and records; 2) elite and specialized interviews with program implementors, day care providers, personnel from community organizations, decision-makers from state and local government, and family day care specialists; 3) a questionnaire that was sent to persons who had received information from a

demonstration project; and 4) site visits to selected programs. The following criteria for predicting successful adoption and continuation of family day care support systems were used in making judgments:

- Characteristics of the program model;
- Recognition of need;
- Manner and extent of dissemination;
- Characteristics of implementors; and
- Facilitating factors.

The characteristicsof the family day care support system model that had been implemented rather extensively in Nassau and Tompkins Counties in New York were judged to have considerable potential for adoption as innovative program ideas. However, there appears to be little recognition of the need for these programs outside of those who have been directly involved with the child development field. The providers of family day care may have considerable felt needs, which could very well be addressed through an educational support system. However, they do not express a demand for such support until after they have experienced it. The strongest statements of need come from authorities and experts among some child development professionals. Efforts to disseminate the model through printed materials, slide sets, workshops and site visits were judged to be necessary but insufficient as means, since most of the ideas were reported to have spread through personal contact with personnel from the two demonstration projects in the state and from Cornell University. Building public support for this new human service was reported to be no small adult education task in and of itself. Implementors, to be successful, were reported to need knowledge of child development, political and organizational skills, and human relations skills along with commitment flexibility and assertiveness. Few agencies outside of Cooperative Extension have given recognition to family day care support systems by assigning staff time to promote them. The program efforts of all implementors suffered from insufficient funding resources, with the result that, for the most part, few implementors have been able to implement the total program model. The programs have been funded with "soft" short term funding from a variety of sources. As a result they have been unable to sustain a stable provision of service. With the exception of the demonstration projects program efforts have had a tendency to

be piecemeal and short-lived in spite of all the effort put into them. The fact that they have survived at all considering the funding climate is a tribute to the determination of those involved. Supportive relationships with local Departments of Social Service, day care centers and child development councils were considered to be essential, yet in many cases professionals from these groups did not afford status or give attention to developing cooperative supportive relationships. In summary, the model appears to be an excellent idea which has had considerable environmental inhibitors slowing its adoption.

The following conclusions of this evaluation, each from a different perspective, were drawn:

1) From a standard-referenced perspective, in which the standard is that every county should have all the components of the demonstration model, most efforts were not very successful since most adopters were able to implement only part of the model;
2) From a cohort-referenced perspective, in which the cohort counties are those in which no effort was made to assist family day care providers, significant progress was made in all twenty counties in which at least parts of the model were adopted;
3) From an alternative-referenced perspective, in which the New York State model is compared to home-visitor and universal training schemes developed elsewhere, the former has significant advantages in terms of adoption. The cost per participant of the New York model is lower than the others, and it offers the possibility of implementing the model a piece at a time as funds become available;
4) From a progress-referenced perspective, a considerable positive change has occurred in building support systems for family day care. Five years ago only one family day care support system existed in New York State; now seventeen of twenty starts are established in the state, and a demand has been created for expansion of support;
5) From a difficulty-referenced perspective, the success of the dissemination effort in a fiscally-stringent environment is nothing short of remarkable.

Family day care support systems reach new audiences through this significant form of adult education. The focus of this study, however, has been on the process of fostering adoption and continuation of support systems. This process itself is a form of adult education. It involves teaching about an innovative model, an

idea and a method. It includes building a climate among learners/implementors which fosters creativity and ingenuity in applying ideas to their own situations. Findings suggest that it is unrealistic to expect that adopters will replicate; rather, they are more likely to adapt. Potential adopters are more likely to accept and value what is being taught (the model) after they have been exposed to it through interaction with teachers/consultants. The study has suggested that the planning process, the dissemination of an innovation, and the struggle to implement are parts of a significant learning process.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW TOPICS FOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTORS

1. What is the nature and extent of your program efforts in support of family day care providers?
2. Who is involved and what are the organizational arrangements and relationships? How do other agencies view your efforts?
3. What was the impetus for your efforts? From where did you get your ideas? Did you use any materials from other programs?
4. What parts of the program do you think should be started first?
5. Did you have any problems in identifying and involving care givers?
6. What forces helped or hindered you from developing a program? What are likely sources of support and opposition?
7. Do you see a possibility of this type of program developing in other places around the country? What would be required for this to happen?
8. What are your funding strategies? From whom do you receive financial support?
9. Does it make any difference who sponsors family day care support systems? Is a relationship with a university useful?
10. If your funding was severely cut, what part(s) of it would you try to save?
11. What are your reasons for providing support services for day care providers? What social values are being expressed?
12. What do you think is the primary function of a family day care home?
13. How do you interpret the program's value to persons who are not involved with it? What is your rationale for convincing others?
14. What do you see as the potential consequences from family day care support systems? What changes are anticipated for day care providers?
15. What are the characteristics of program directors like yourself which are needed for the success of the project? How do you bring people together? What is your style of work?

APPENDIX A (Continued)

INTERVIEW TOPICS FOR PROVIDERS, AGENCY PERSONNEL,
POLICY-MAKERS AND CONSULTANTS

1. What is the nature of the organizational interrelationships involved in the family day care support system in which you are involved?
2. What values and goals do you see being expressed?
3. What do you see as the costs and benefits of this program?
4. What present and potential resources do you see as being available for use in adopting and continuing these programs?
5. Can you describe the critical incidents in the development of the program with which you are familiar?
6. How do you assess the approach implicit in this program from your particular viewpoint?

APPENDIX B

Dear

Recognizing the growth of family day care support systems throughout New York State and the nation, the Carnegie Foundation has funded a research team from Cornell University to gain further understanding of the spread of these efforts. This research is funded in conjunction with the Foundation's support of the Nassau County (New York) Family Day Care Resource Center, though it is administered independently.

We understand that you have made inquiries of the Nassau County program about possible use of the idea. As we are attempting to document the collective experience of those who are or have been engaged in efforts to develop supportive services for family day care, we hope that you will complete and return, as promptly as possible, the attached brief questionnaire. Since the frustrations are as essential as the successes in understanding this kind of service, we ask that you answer the questions freely regardless of the current status of your efforts. Your answers will, of course, be held in confidence by the research team and the information will not be associated with individuals in any way.

Your cooperation in returning the questionnaire in the self-addressed stamped envelope will be most helpful. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Irving Lazar, Project Director
David Deshler
Steven Maynard-Moody
Diane B. Jaenicke

INQUIRERS' EXPERIENCE WITH PROGRAM IDEAS

1. What is the extent and nature of your contact with the Nassau County Family Day Care Resource Center?

2. What kinds or sources of information from the Nassau County Program have you used?

   _____Site-visit
   _____Slide set
   _____Written materials (please specify on back if possible)
   _____Workshops conducted by program staff
   _____Telephone conversations or visits with staff

3. a. How have you been able to use any of this information?

   b. Can you list any outcome or activity in which this information played an important role?

   c. Can you list any decision areas in which this information was important to you?

4. How would you describe your role with regard to family day care support efforts in your community?

5. What problems, if any, do you see in developing such a program in your community?

6. What suggestions for the staff, if any, would you make regarding ideas about such programs or how they could best be communicated to others?

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